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**BODY AND AWARENESS, SANDRA REEVE (ED.) (2021)**

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*Body and Awareness* is the third volume in the Ways of Being a Body series, edited by Sandra Reeve. In Volume 1, Reeve provided readers with western-based sociopolitical and historical perspectives that contribute to the conceptualization of bodies. In Volume 2, she considered how performance contributes to 'being a body' via 'co-creative interaction' between the self, other and environment (Reeve 2013: 5). In this third volume, Reeve considers various somatic practitioners' perspectives of bodies and awareness.

In reviewing the series thus far, I consider that if Volume 1 situates ways of being a body in sociopolitical and historical frameworks, and Volume 2 offers how performance co-creates ways of being a body, then Volume 3 encourages readers to explore how somatic practices themselves, and the practitioners who teach them, shapes and hones being, knowing and bodies. Together, these volumes offer stimuli and perspectives, which Reeve prompts readers to both relish in as-is and to self-interpret.

*Body and Awareness* offers knowledges that emboldens the value of somatic approaches to therapies and creative practices. In each chapter, Reeve encourages the reader to consider how each practitioner's processes might serve as a type of witness to or articulator of, their own experiences. The book is structured as an 'interdisciplinary collection of viewpoints and practices on the topic of Body and Awareness' (1). The twenty chapters in this anthology define and articulate the central concepts of body and awareness within frameworks which range between various movement practices, philosophies, Buddhism and psychophysical therapies. The authors illustrate their practice and knowledge through case studies, vignettes and/or retrospections.

Awareness that is fostered in, through and from movement is complexly explored in this volume. 'The actively imagining body' by Helen Edwards, 'The imaginary body' by Alex Crow and 'The instrumental body' by Olga Masleinnikova discuss the relationship between imagination, movement and awareness within respective frameworks. In 'The moving body', Reeve ruminates on 'movement art practice through the lens of embodied/metaphoric cognition' (141). Paula Kramer explores the dynamic nature of embodied awareness within somatic processes in 'The changing body'. Elaine Hendry Westwick draws on scientific training and Authentic Movement to analyse experiences of awareness in 'The integrative body'.

Moving deeper into imaginative, interpretive and metaphoric somatic spaces, Anna Murray-Preece advocates for the potential of Buddhist kayas to facilitate emotional, physical and mental awareness in 'The emanation body'.

Sarah Hyde reflects on how awareness is created in the interplay between dreams, the environment, healing and movement in 'The dreamweaving body'. Carran Waterfield navigates through her performance memory to consider how movement and writing collectively contributes to creative awareness in 'The poetic body'. Hilary Kneale suggests how awareness may be facilitated through shamanistic states of consciousness and environmental movement in 'The alchemical body'.

Coming explicitly into environmentally based practices, Margaret Kerr reflects on walking as an intuitive somatic experience in 'The intuitive body'. Becca Wood walks and sounds the reader through 'The choreoauratic body' by reflecting on her New Zealand-based practice. In 'The vegetal body', Ali East explores the power of micro-level awareness through imagination and empathetic shifts in perspective by positioning the body as both a vehicle for environmental change and as a point of introspection.

*Body and Awareness* also considers how bodies and awareness impact and facilitate well-being. Jamila Rodrigues looks at how awareness plays a role in re-shaping perceptions of physical pain in 'The pain body'. In 'The signing body', Sheila Ryan exemplifies how homeopathy may be an effective biosemiotic practice. Ditty Dokter draws on Amertia Movement and journaling in 'The transformative body' to unpack the notions of belonging and environment as a cancer survivor. Céline Butté motivates how dance movement psychotherapy cultivates an awareness of the body that 'opens up spaces for deep and long-lasting healing' (233) in 'The unveiled body'.

The concepts of what awareness and the body may mean independently and when in relation to one another are discussed with critical awareness in this volume. In 'The psychodynamic body', Sandra Kay Lauffenburger challenges the reader to consider that existing perceptions of both terms may not fully encapsulate the dynamic and unfolding nature of either what it is to have and be body or to have and exist with/in awareness. Similarly, in 'The enfolding body', Kim Sargent-Wishart reflects on awareness from objective and subjective perspectives. Sharing Sargent-Wishart's curiosity is Laura Haughey, who interrogates the relationship between proprioception, awareness and self-perception in 'The proprioceptive body'.

Throughout the volume, there is a through-line of the relationships which are co-created between the self and artificial, metaphorical and natural environments in processes of awareness making and meaning. Additionally, the power of metaphors is reiterated in various chapters as an access point into somatic and environmental knowledges and awareness. The narrative this creates within itself cultivates another notable through-line for the volume. However, some metaphors may have been applied too liberally, especially considering the interdisciplinary readership it may attract.

The division between the right and left hemispheres of the brain is suggested in this publication to influence the creative application of our bodies and the awareness we cultivate. Yet since the 1990s, within both psychology and neuroscience, it has been accepted that considering brain parts or regions as separate systems, components or responsible for different functions, is only a metaphor that ran rogue (see Barrett 2021; Cobb 2020). In another example, the idea that the body is an instrument is also accommodated by particular chapters. While this metaphor is commonplace in performance frameworks, it may be conceptually problematic in somatics, where the body is offered as a dynamic and vital entity.

Overall, *Body and Awareness* is an important contribution to education, knowing and practice within a predominantly Eurocentric paradigm of somatics. This volume reflects how somatic processes may influence, shape, change, transform, inspire and provoke the embodied body's experiences within different contextual bodies of awareness. *Body and Awareness* is an informative guide for teachers, students, practitioners and researchers who operate within the disciplines of somatics, psychosomatics, psychology, embodied cognition, creative arts, alternative medicines and mindfulness. For the readership of *The Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices*, Reeve's volume provides insights and provocations that may enrich research and practice which intends to explore what it means to cultivate and explore awareness in and through physical and metaphorical bodies.

In the opening line of her introduction, Reeve states that she is 'interested in the spaces between' (1). Within this work, she has succeeded in curating a body of practices and practitioners that not only occupy such spaces, but also provide transformative bridges which may connect these spaces.

## REFERENCES

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## CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Micia de Wet (Ph.D., AFHEA) is an actor, theatre-maker and researcher. Her research has been published in *Theatre Research International*; *Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture* and *Brain, Body, Cognition*. She has lectured at the University of Pretoria and at the Tshwane University of Technology. Her practice-based research weaves between somatics, cognitive science and acting. Her performances work explores themes of death, identity and time. She currently lives and works in the United Kingdom.

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